that befit repentance" resulted in a clean conscience and in peace with God.—Acts 26:20; John 17:3.

Is Religious History of Any Benefit?

Indeed it is. Large parts of the Bible contain beneficial religious history. (Romans 15:4) The Gospels show how Jesus taught the truth about God and His purpose for the earth. Jesus' followers were to wait for the heavenly Kingdom that would solve earthly problems. "Keep on the watch, therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour," Jesus said. —Matthew 6:9, 10; 25:1-13.

Religious history confirms the coming of the predicted imitation Christians, who established their own earthly reign. The Reformation changed the face of the world but did not restore pure Bible teachings. History also points to the existence of modern Christians who "keep on the watch," are "no part of the world," and put God's Kingdom first. (John 17:16) This information has helped many people to identify Jesus' true followers today.

Barbara, mentioned at the beginning of this article, is one of the more than 3,000,000 active Witnesses worldwide who try to reach honest people with "the pure teaching of the Gospel." A certain amount of knowledge about religious history has been of benefit to these Kingdom proclamers too.

Dangers of Wealth and of Poverty

DOES the Bible disparage wealth and encourage poverty? Many people think so. But two related proverbs help to clarify this.

Proverbs 10:15 states: "The valuable things of a rich man are his strong town. The ruin of the lowly ones is their poverty." Then verse 16 adds: "The activity of the righteous one results in life; the produce of the wicked one results in sin." Note how these two complement each other.

Verse 15 testifies that wealth has its advantages, poverty its disadvantages. Riches may help to protect a person from some of the uncertainties of life. The poor person, though, may have added problems because of being financially unable to cope with unexpected developments. In this the Bible is realistic.—Ecclesiastes 7:12.

However, verse 15 can also be understood as hinting at a danger involving wealth or poverty. Many a rich man puts his complete trust in his money; he views it as all the protection he needs. (Proverbs 18:

11) Yet, riches cannot help him to get a good name with God or ensure his lasting happiness. In fact, riches can make that more difficult. Jesus' illustration of the rich man who built bigger storehouses but was not rich toward God bears this out. (Luke 12: 16-21; 18:24, 25) On the other hand, many poor people mistakenly take the

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